

EXHIBIT 3  
DATE 1-29-09  
HB 360

Written Testimony of Kelly Hart  
Montana Legal Services Association  
Helena, Montana  
Proponent for HB360

Good morning Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. For the record, my name is Kelly Hart. For the last two and a half years, I was the Economic Advocacy Coordinator with Montana Legal Services Association in Helena, where I helped build financial resources for low-income Montanans.

Montana Legal Services assists low-income Montanans with civil legal issues. Every day we see how hard it is for our clients with low-wage jobs to pay for housing, child care, food, gas, and medical care.

We also collaborate with the Montana Department of Revenue, Rural Dynamics Incorporated, and Montana's Credit Unions on a website called MontanaFreeFile.org. This website provides information about various free tax filing services including an online program called I-CAN! E-File. Montana Legal Services has been promoting the I-CAN! E-File program for the last six years. Through this program, we have seen first-hand how important, but insufficient, the EITC is for Montana's working families.

Since we began outreach on the I-CAN! program, over 5,500 Montana returns have been filed using the program. This has brought nearly \$6.9 million in refunds to the state, half of which has come from the federal Earned Income Tax Credit.

Many of the families we work with use the EITC to make delayed repairs to their cars and trucks, pay off medical debt, secure housing, or simply put food on their tables. Creating a state EITC offers hard working Montana families economic stability in a time of economic uncertainty.

Please support the hard-working families of Montana by supporting this bill.